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THE WHITE HOUSE

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September 3, 1983

Executive Registry
83-4352

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. DONALD P. GREGG
Assistant to the Vice President
for National Security Affairs

MR. CHARLES HILL
Executive Secretary
Department of State

COL JOHN STANFORD
Executive Secretary
Department of Defense

MR. ROGER CLEGG
Special Assistant to the Attorney General
Department of Justice

MR. ALTON KEEL
Associate Director for National
Security and International Affairs
Office of Management and Budget

[redacted] 25X1
Executive Secretary
Central Intelligence Agency

MS. JACKIE TILLMAN
Executive Assistant to the United States
Representative to the United Nations
Department of State

BRIGADIER GENERAL GEORGE A. JOULWAN
Executive Assistant to the Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: NSPG Meeting on the Lebanon Situation (C)

Attached is the paper prepared by State Department for the NSPG meeting today at 11:00 am in the White House Situation Room. (C)

Robert M. Kimmitt
Robert M. Kimmitt
Executive Secretary
National Security Council

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I. Current Situation

We are at a turning point in Lebanon. The past week opened with heavy fighting in West Beirut which seemed to be moving the country toward the precipice of civil war. The week ended with a more confident LAF in control of most of West Beirut and intensified GOL efforts toward national reconciliation. The IDF will begin its redeployment midnight September 3-4 and should be out of most of the Shuf by the end of September 4 unless a last minute LAF approach to the IDF can win a four-day phased withdrawal. Lebanon's future will very likely be determined in the next few days by what we, the Lebanese, the Israelis, and the Syrians do.

On August 31 President Gemayel issued a call for all of Lebanon's major factional leaders to meet with him in discussions on national unity. Although it was not the announcement of a government of national unity we had expected, it was a step in the right direction which we strongly supported with demarches in allied and Arab capitals. Following the battle for West Beirut as it did, however, Gemayel's initiative may be too late. Jumblatt's initial response was that he would meet Gemayel only on the battlefield. Following his September 2 meeting with Prince Bandar, however, Jumblatt said he and (Tripoli's Sunni leader) Rashid Karami would meet Gemayel if he was not accompanied by Gemayel's father or Sa'eb Salam. Jumblatt thought Franjieh could also be persuaded to join the meeting. Nevertheless, Jumblatt had not yet discussed the meeting with the Syrians, who are unlikely to approve.

The GOL has, however, met with Nabih Barri, the Shia militia leader, and they are reportedly near agreement. The LAF clearly needs to protect its rear from the Shia in Beirut if it moves to deploy in Aley and the Shuf. This may be the reason for the current "truce" between the LAF and Shia militiamen in the southern Beirut suburbs. Similarly, the September 2 Cabinet Announcement that the LAF will deploy into East Beirut is clearly intended to demonstrate that the Army is willing to move against Christians as well as Muslims. Whether or not this move takes place, the LAF emerged from the fighting in West Beirut more confident and more credible as a military force. Above all, the LAF did not fragment along confessional lines as some had predicted. Nevertheless, the August 31 massacre of at least 24 Christians in the Matn, including women, children, and old people, could be a harbinger of what might happen if the LAF moves into the Shuf.

The GOL has also stepped up its diplomatic efforts. A letter has now been dispatched to the Arab League demanding the

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withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, including the Syrians, and a copy of this letter has been sent to the UN Secretary General for distribution as an official document. A similar letter is reportedly on its way to President Assad. President Gemayel will also shortly approach the UN Security Council for assistance in the Shuf. It is unlikely, however, that these initiatives will prove very useful in the immediate future, especially with the Syrians.

The role of the Syrians remains crucial. We have delivered two strong demarches to the Syrians this week. Khaddam predictably rejected our first demarche urging the Syrians to support Gemayel's call for national reconciliation. He insisted that the LAF's actions in West Beirut had been designed to ensure that it would be politically impossible for the opposition to join national unity calls. He also argued that U.S. Marines had aided the LAF on fighting the West Beirut militias. We have now also delivered a strong demarche putting Syria on notice that the United States intends to defend its personnel against attacks from any quarter. To buttress our warning, we have moved a 2000-man Marine unit to the Mediterranean and the Eisenhower will remain on station near Lebanon. The line has been drawn.

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Major Issues

1. Political reconciliation: Gemayel's strategy is to offer the most prominent leaders of Lebanon's communal groups a share in governing the country. Beginning with consultations, this would end in formation of a government of national unity. The most immediate focus is on getting the support of Shia leader Nabih Barri. Gemayel has his own agenda but will respond to our advice even on this delicate internal matter.

Assumptions:

-- Broadens government's communal base and popular support.

-- Pulls basically anti-Syrian opposition leaders away from Damascus orbit to get more political influence.

-- Undercuts Syrian propaganda and increases Arab support.

-- Reduces GOL cohesion and ability to act quickly.

-- Delays any possibility for implementation of Lebanon-Israel Agreement.

Questions:

Has Gemayel moved too slowly to accommodate other major leaders?

Should U.S. diplomats encourage him to proceed?

What should we say about the Agreement?

How can we help induce positive responses to the reconciliation offer?

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2. LAF Deployment: We agree with the Lebanese that LAF must demonstrate both readiness to employ force to maintain security and impartiality toward the different religious communities. An army which uses massive force to restore order in West Beirut but is unable to clear Christian militias from the streets of East Beirut will in time create the very violence it seeks to halt. President Gemayel and his top political and military aides understand this. They also know that the army must be seen as fair to Muslims if it can hope to be accepted in the Shuf.

Assumptions:

-- The next LAF move may be to take control of East Beirut in an operation which would assure Lebanese Forces acquiescence in advance.

-- Alternately, Gemayel may order the LAF to seize the approaches to Beirut in Aley and south of the city, possibly with IDF cooperation. Unless limited to Christian areas now under IDF control, it would be very difficult absent a political agreement with the Druze.

-- Movement of the LAF into the Shuf or further up the road to Damascus can be successfully opposed by Druze militias backed by the Syrians. Absent a political agreement, it would not make good military sense. The necessary political agreement wih Jumblatt appears unobtainable for now.

Questions:

Should the LAF fully secure the streets of Beirut before venturing out of the capital?

What could Israelis do to facilitate LAF deployment outside Beirut?

What could the MNF do to further bolster LAF presence in Beirut?

Does LAF need any additional equipment or trining for its short term mission?

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3. Syria's Role: Syria's objectives in the current situation are twofold -- to force abrogation of the Lebanon/Israel Agreement and to bend the Lebanese Government to Damascus' will. To these ends, Assad is willing to run a high risk policy using his considerable assets to physically intimidate Lebanese communal leaders as well as to employ military force in support of Syria's surrogates. Syria sees Gemayel as totally controlled by and committed to the Phalange. Syria has become so implacably opposed to Amin Gemayel that it is willing to see him fall rather than attempt to reach some accommodation with him. In discussions in recent days with Foreign Minister Khaddam, it has become clear that the Syrians are unwilling to accept anything less than total acquiescence in their policy towards Lebanon. The Israeli redeployment and Begin's forthcoming resignation are being read in Damascus as vindication of Assad's policy.

Assumptions:

-- Syria is unlikely to be persuaded to change its present course through persuasion and the implicit threat of Israeli military reaction is no longer a credible deterrent.

-- Syria will do all in its power to prevent the LAF from peacefully extending its authority into the Shuf following the Israeli redeployment.

-- Gemayel's attempts to form a government of national unity are likely to be opposed by Syria unless the influence and power of the Phalange is significantly reduced and the Gemayel Government caves completely to the Syrian opposition to the Lebanon-Israel Agreement.

Questions:

What will be the likely Syrian reaction to a LAF attempt to enter the Shuf? What can we do about it?

What are the most appropriate means to counter Syrian overt or covert military support to Jumblatt's militia? How should we react to Syrian artillery shelling of East Beirut or to Syrian military deployment into the Shuf following an Israeli withdrawal?

Are there ways to lessen Syrian control over Lebanese communal leaders in order to give a greater chance of success to Gemayel's efforts to form a national unity government?

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4. Israeli Military Posture in Lebanon: In response to the President's request which was put to Prime Minister Begin on August 29, the Israelis have delayed yet again their redeployment from the Shuf until Sunday, September 4. Current planning is for the move to begin early morning on September 4 and Begin has made it clear that he wants to be able to complete the move in time to release as many troops as possible for the New Year's holidays beginning September 7. The redeployment to the Awali Line is likely to be carried out during the course of one day. It is unlikely that Israel would agree to a request for a phased withdrawal lasting several days since this would require going back to the drawing boards on planning and also because the Israelis want to complete the move before the Jewish New Year. The IDF will be in a high state of alert during and immediately after the redeployment but in essentially a defensive posture.

Assumptions:

-- The Israeli decision is irreversible and redeployment will begin at first light on Sunday.

-- The Israelis will strongly resist the notion of even phasing the redeployment over several days. They want to move quickly so as not to put the IDF at risk.

-- The IDF is unlikely to resist Druze demands to turn over military fortifications to Jumblatt's militia rather than run the risk of suffering Israeli casualties in order to have the LAF take over the positions.

Questions:

Once withdrawal to the Awali has taken place, would the Israelis react to a Syrian attempt to infiltrate its forces into the Shuf?

Would the Israelis stand aside if violent intercommunal fighting broke out in the Shuf?

What should we ask Israel to do with its assets in the Druze community and with the Lebanese Forces?

If the LAF tries to fight its way into the Shuf, should we urge Israel to provide air and/or artillery support?

5. MNF Role (being drafted by David Mack)

6. Military Options to Respond to Syrians
(being drafted by David Mack)

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FROM ROBERT M. KIMMITT
(NAME) (EXTENSION) (ROOM NUMBER)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION USPG MEETING

| TO (AGENCY) | DELIVER TO: | DEPT/ROOM NO. | EXTENSION |
|---|---|---|---|
| STATE | CHARLES HILL | | |
| | MS. JACKIE TILLMAN | USUN | |
| DOD | COL. JOHN STANFORD | | |
| | BGEN. GEORGE A. SOUL[redacted] | | |
| CIA | [redacted] | | |
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REMARKS:

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Special Assistant to the Attorney General
Department of Justice

MR. ALTON KEEL
Associate Director for National
Security and International Affairs
Office of Management and Budget

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Executive Secretary
Central Intelligence Agency

MS. JACKIE TILLMAN
Executive Assistant to the United States
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BRIGADIER GENERAL GEORGE A. JOULWAN
Executive Assistant to the Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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Robert M. Kimmitt
Robert M. Kimmitt
Executive Secretary
National Security Council

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5. Role of the MNF: The President decided that we would defer any decision on an MNF deployment to the Shuf until we had full assurances from the principal parties (the GOL, LF and Druze) that they had reached a prior political agreement and were confident that they would live up to that agreement. However, should the LAF deploy to the Shuf, and President Gemayel ask for MNF assistance to beleaguered LAF units, our response would have to be well thought out and rapid. Leaving the MNF in place in the face of a request for assistance would be damaging to the morale and effectiveness of the LAF whose officers might interpret our lack of visible support as a lack of confidence in their capability and that of the GOL, causing [redacted] a "presence" could both help to stiffen the LAF and deter the Syrians and other elements opposed to the LAF. It could rescue a deteriorating situation. On the other hand, effective resistance to the LAF by dissident elements despite MNF presence could then force us to another major decision. Once our presence was provided, failure would be doubly humiliating. An inevitable consequence of simply providing "presence" could be active MNF support of the LAF. Although movement of the MNF into this role could be effective against the dissidents and tip the scales against a politically hesitant Syrian intervention, the MNF is not configured to fight the Syrians in an all-out war unless major Syrian elements were engaged.

Assumptions:

-- There is no prior political agreement when the LAF enters the Shuf.

-- The LAF is unable to carry out its mission as a result of active Syrian opposition, or because of covert Syrian support for its opponent. (There are reports, for example, of plans for large-scale movement of Syrian troops disguised as Druze into the Shuf.)

Congressional and Legal Considerations:

Any deployment of U.S. forces in support of the LAF which has the effect of introducing them into actual or imminent hostilities would trigger the requirements of the War Powers Resolution for prior consultation, reporting to Congress within 48 hours, and withdrawal within 60 days in the absence of Congressional authorization. Many in Congress have strongly

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insisted that our forces have already been introduced into such a situation, and have sharply criticized our failure to acknowledge this in our August 30 War Powers report and to seek Congressional authorization. The deployment of U.S. forces into areas of active hostilities, such as might be the case in the Shuf, would raise serious War Powers questions and would undoubtedly increase Congressional pressure to seek legislation, even if U.S. forces did not have a direct combat role.

Furthermore, Section 4 of the 1983 Lebanon Supplemental, which requires Congressional authorization with respect to any substantial expansion of the number or role of U.S. forces in Lebanon, would clearly be triggerrd by their assumption of a combat role, and it would be very difficult to escape the same result with respect to any U.S. deployment in the Shuf under present conditions. We would not need to obtain this authorization prior to deployment, but would need to propose legislation and marshall Congressional support as soon as possible.

Questions:

What action will Gemayel specifically request of the MNF?

Will he ask for MNF "presence" in the Shuf: because the LAF is simply stretched too thin, to reassure the local populations as the LAF begins to replace home-town militias, or to lend authority to the LAF as it begins to shoulder aside the local militias?

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In case of deployment without prior agreement (or if an agreement were to fall apart), would Gemayel ask for direct MNF support?

How would we respond in a situation

-- where the Syrian Army had stayed dormant and the LAF proved unable to copy with militias?

-- or alternatively where LAF overcame the Lebanese opposition, but the Syrian Army joined in to rescue its allies?

Would we respond by

-- leaving the MNF in place?

-- redeploying to lend "presence"?

-- intervening to actively support the LAF?

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6. Military Actions to Deter the Syrians: It will be important for the U.S. to make good on its declaration to the Syrians that the MNF would take appropriate steps to defend itself. In addition, the context of LAF movement into the Shuf, we may want to deter the Syrians from directly or indirectly disrupting LAF efforts to extend GOL authority to the area.

Assumptions:

-- We obtain solid evidence that the Syrians are firing on or actively supporting others firing on the LAF or MNF positions.

Questions:

Should the U.S. response by

-- expanding U.S. and allied naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean?

-- visible coordinated U.S.-Israeli military contingency planning in context of Lebanon?

-- selective electronic warfare against Syrian communications in Lebanon?

-- use of U.S. naval gunfire, artillery, gunships and attack aircraft against Syrian occupied areas?

-- MNF patrolling to Syrian lines?

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MESSAGE DESCRIPTION USPG MEETING

| TO (AGENCY) | DELIVER TO: | DEPT/ROOM NO. | EXTENSION |
|---|---|---|---|
| STATE | CHARLES HILL | | |
| | MS. JACKIE TILLMAN | USUN | |
| DOD | COL. JOHN STANFORD | | |
| | BGEN. GEORGE A. JOULWAN | | |
| CIA | [redacted] | | |
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REMARKS:

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